CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1.   A voice command platform programmed to receive a call from a user, to answer
the call, and to send to the user a speech signal representing a consolidated summary of counts of
messages waiting for the user at a plurality of message portals.

2.   The voice command platform of claim 1, further programmed to maintain a
record of counts of messages waiting for the user at the plurality of message portals.

3.   The voice command platform of claim 1, wherein the plurality of message portals
comprises a portal selected from the group consisting of (i) an e-mail portal, (ii) a voice mail
portal, (iii) a fax portal, and (iv) an instant messaging portal.

4.   The voice command platform of claim 2, further programmed to receive update
signals from the plurality of message portals, the update signals indicating updates of counts of
messages waiting for the user at the plurality of message portals.

5.   The voice command platform of claim 4, further programmed to update the record
based on the update signals.

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6. The voice command platform of claim 4, further programmed to request message-waiting updates from the plurality of message portals, wherein the voice command platform receives the update signals in response.

5   7. The voice command platform of claim 6, wherein the voice command platform is programmed to periodically poll the plurality of message portals for the message-waiting updates.

10   8. The voice command platform of claim 1, further programmed to personalize the consolidated summary based on a notification profile maintained for the user.

9. The voice command platform of claim 8, wherein the notification profile for the user indicates parameters to include in the consolidated summary, and wherein the platform therefore includes those parameters in the consolidated summary.

15   10. The voice command platform of claim 8, wherein the notification profile for the user indicates user-specific name of at least one of the message portals, and wherein the consolidated summary refers to the message portal by the user-specific name.

20   11. A voice command platform comprising:

a user communication interface for communicating with users via a telecommunications network;

a processor;

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an application-processing module executable by the processor to process voice command applications, the voice command applications defining user-prompts, allowed grammars, and application logic;

a voice-processing module executable by the processor to recognize the allowed grammars in speech signals received from a user via the user communication interface, and to convert the user-prompts into speech signals for transmission to the user via the user communication interface;

a user profile store including, respectively for each of a plurality of users, a consolidated message summary indicating counts of messages waiting for the user at a plurality of message portals; and

consolidated-message-notification logic executable by the processor to communicate to a given user, via the user communication interface, an indication of the counts of messages waiting for the user at the plurality of message portals, as reflected by the message summary for the given user.

12. The voice command platform of claim 11, wherein the consolidated-message-notification logic is executable to communicate the indication to the user at the initiation of a voice command session with the user.

13. The voice command platform of claim 11, wherein:

the processor receives update-messages from the plurality of message portals, the update-messages indicating updated counts of messages waiting at the message portals for at least one user; and

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based on the update-messages, the processor updates the consolidated message summary for at least one user.

14.   The voice command platform of claim 13, further comprising portal-polling logic executable by the processor to request updates of message waiting counts from the plurality of message portals, wherein the processor receives the update-messages in response.

15.   The voice command platform of claim 13, wherein the portal-polling logic is executable by the processor to periodically request the updates of message waiting counts from the plurality of message portals.

16.   The voice command platform of claim 11, wherein the user communication interface communicates with at least some users over a communication path comprising a wireless communication link.

17.   A method comprising:

receiving from each of a plurality of separate message-portals a respective message-waiting count for a common user;

receiving a voice call from the common user; and

presenting to the common user a spoken summary of the respective message-waiting counts for the plurality of separate message-portals.

18.   The method of claim 17, further comprising polling the separate message-portals for the respective message-waiting counts for the common user.

19.   The method of claim 17, wherein receiving a respective message-waiting count from a given message-portal comprises:

receiving a signaling message that specifies the respective message-waiting count.

20.   The method of claim 17, wherein receiving a respective message-waiting count from a given message-portal comprises:

receiving a plurality of signaling messages from the given message-portal, the plurality of signaling messages cooperatively defining the respective message-count.

21.   The method of claim 17, further comprising:

reading a stored notification profile for the common user, to identify a user-specific name for at least a given one of the message-portals; and

in the spoken summary, referring to the given message-portal by the user-specific name.

22.   The method of claim 17, further comprising presenting the spoken summary to the common user during an initial welcome message upon answering the voice call from the common user.

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23.   The method of claim 22, wherein presenting the spoken summary to the common

user comprises sending the spoken summary to the user over a telecommunications network

comprising a wireless communication link.

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